

Title: Interview with Ronald Campbell

Date: April 19, 2025

Location: Shiloh United Methodist Church in Crisfield

Interviewer(s): Sam Gundlach and Joseph Grenagle

Interviewee: Ronald Campbell

Introduction: Ronald Campbell is a 69-year-old former school teacher that was raised in Crisfield before leaving for many years, and then coming back to take care of his elderly mother in Crisfield. He talks about how raising kids was difficult due to the lack of things for children to do in Crisfield to help keep them away from trouble, and how Crisfield needs all the help it can get to have jobs for the youth.

[Transcription begins]

Sam Gundlach (Gundlach): My name is Sam.

Joseph Grenagle (Grenagle): My name is Joseph Greenagle.

Robert Campell (Campbell): Robert Campbell.

Gundlach: And it is April 19th at 12:37. We are in the Shiloh United Methodist Church in Crisfield and we're going to start the interview now. So how long have you lived in the Crisfield area?

Campbell: Well, mostly all my life, really. I left here and went to the Army, Military Army, at 18. And I came back again at 34. In- in rural area. I stayed in Salisbury for eight and a half years, lived in Marion for 11 years and the past 10-15 years I've been here in Crisfield, back in my hometown.

Grenagle: What brought you back?

Campbell: Well, my mother, she's still living. She's 91 years old and she needs somebody to help to take care of her a little bit, look after her anyway, you know, and I'm the one. [pauses]

Grenagle: Was she also a Crisfield resident?

Campbell: Yes, yes. Yeah, she was here- here in Marion. I brought my own- my fiancé back here after 34 years. She passed a couple years ago, cancer, and I've been here ever since, really.

Gundlach: So, what are some of your most cherished memories of Crisfield?

Campbell: Well, growing up with some of our friends and going to school and, you know, the old school days, and a lot of my friends, a lot of them had passed, but still a few more left, you know. And we had, you know, good- good days, you know better days, you know, than now, I guess, really, because it's- it's hard, it's not a hardship, but it's like it wasn't back in the 70s and 60s, you know, 80s anyway.

Grenagle: We've heard that era, or those eras described as booming. Would you say that that's the case?

Campbell: Yeah, they had more opportunities for like jobs. I worked at Paul's Kitchen for six, seven years. And I've been in the school, I was in the school system 24 years, Boyer education in Crisfield. And when I came back right here, you know, for 24 years, you know, I worked in the school system, Somerset Boyer Education. I'm retired, I am retired in '22. You found a '22. (2022) [pauses]

Gundlach: So, what is the role of family and family life in Crisfield?

Campbell: Well, I raised my three kids here, here in Marion, and they're all grown now. My youngest child, son, really, he works for the Postal Service in Pennsylvania. And he's, that man's 30, I think he'd be 30 if he didn't see, he's 95, so he'd be 30 in July the 2nd, he'd 30. That's my youngest child. I have a son in the military is in California, he's been in military for 13 years. My other daughter, she's a nurse, she's been doing it, she's known for quite a while, too. She's 32.

Gundlach: Did you raise them in Crisfield?

Campbell: I raised them, they were born in Salisbury and we stayed in you move from there after eight years. It came to Marion and stayed there for 11 years and I came to Crisfield and they graduated from Crisfield High School. And I work in the school system myself while they were going to school. So, I've seen a lot of kids around here, young kids, graduating, you know. I started there in 2000, I think. 1999, 1999, yeah, 1999.

Gundlach: How have you seen education change over the years?

Campbell: Well, they got this thing in school, and I've seen a lot of teachers, good teachers, white and black, retired because they had this thing there and No Child Left Behind. It's a good system, but the kids don't fail. When I was going to school, they used to fail me. These kids don't fail. They take like a bridge test, it's like a bridge thing to take to get them over, like it's like getting them over the hump, I guess, and to give them- give them the diploma. And I seen a lot of kids that really, really wasn't ready for it. But then, some of them would wear it, but knowledgeable-wise, they really weren't ready for it, right not ready to graduate. I was going to school with kids, we had kids 20 years old, graduating, because they were failing, you know,

they were failing. These kids don't fail, they put you out of school, you know. I think it's because of the money, they get a certain amount of money every- every year or something for funds, for the fund kids. Is that a good thing or a bad thing? To some people it might be a bad thing because you don't get education that you really need, you know. You know, I went to college for a couple years, you know, and I didn't finish, but, you know, it was an opportunity to see what it was, you know, what it really was, you know, and I guess, being young as you are, you do say, I guess, you know, you're drinking and drugging or whatever, you know, but now it's legal, it has legal. Back then, marijuana was not legal, you know, so I don't think you can, some people can, I could perform, just smoke a reefer. I could not perform, not doing education work anyway, really, I guess, if I didn't finish, I guess.

Grenagle: What a role, if you feel you have a role in Crisfield, what role would that be?

Campbell: Well, I- I try- I try to tell these kids that back there, you know, back now, if you want to get an education or something, get it, and do something with your life, you know. I mean, I didn't mess- I didn't mess my life because I graduated and everything, but I try and tell kids and stuff to do better. When I was in school, I was a drug counselor because I used to get high myself, so I knew what it was to get high and I knew what it was, like I said a while ago, I couldn't perform. I couldn't perform like all high, some people can't, I could. But then see, you have to, it's like my kids, I- I- I- I always told my kids be better than me, you know, do things I didn't do, that I shouldn't have done. But then, cause I raised, all together I raised six kids, my wife had, she had three and I had three, so we raised really six kids, you know. All my- all my kids is really- all them kids is doing good for yourself, you know, pray to the Lord, you know, doing things for the good for the stuff. You know, they never getting them drugs. They might, see my daughter might pick up- pick up a beer or something with her girlfriend. It's all that kind of crazy mess, but them drugs, they don't miss no drugs. That's- that's the- that's main thing, you- you- know you get overdose down if anything, you don't smoke a cigarette really, but drugs shut you down.

Gundlach: So you were a drug counselor for a while, do you see a lot of- a lot of drug use in Crisfield?

Campbell: It is, really. It is. Because to me, they don't, they- they do something about it. But they need to put you back on the street. I mean, you know I've seen it now. A lot of people, they get time for drug jail. But then, if you do two years- two years, they put you on the streets. Do you think that's benefiting you any? If you don't go to a counselor- counselor, you know, like me, when I stop drinking and get- get high. I would do, I would, I'd do weird. Thank God, I've been clean now 30, 34, 35 years, you know, I don't even drink beer, champagne or nothing. Not that I'm down to the bottom to do it, but I don't, I gave it up, I gave up all up. Smoking cigarettes, all of them. And I don't down people what to do, because you do what you want to do. But it's your body, and your life. But it- it ain't gonna do you no good, especially in the long run. Because

most people who are drinking or drugging, I mean, that you get cancer for anything but- but smoking, you know, it's first thing to say do you smoke cigarettes? You know you got cancer. Most people who- who got cancer smoke cigarettes, my late sister, she died for really, you known she had emphysema, but she had a cancer, she had lung cancer, and she drunk bitch. She loved her beer. You know, she love her beer. Yeah, but first thing the doctor ask them, "Did you- did you drink, did you do, you know, smoke cigarettes?" which was yes, you know. Well, like I said, you don't down people what they do, because everybody have done it, maybe. But you gotta- gotta disperse it, I guess. You know, see what to expect, see what the effects really is.

Grenagle: How do you entertain yourself in Crisfield?

Campbell: Well, I try to be a Christian person. I try and stay close to the Lord. I go, I got three- three prayer lines. I go to church every Sunday. Most, most, most activities in church I go too. And I don't, I'm not saying I hang with nobody else. I try hang with people who are going toward the Lord, toward the salvation. You know, trying to light the gallows, trying, you know, like that, you know. It still brings me to hang with a person who drinks. I don't drink, you know, so I mean, like I said, I don't down people do, because eventually, you're going to come in. You're going bow you're gonna bow on your knees one day. We're all going to bow on our knees one day. And, you know, you don't, you never said that you try to judge, I don't try to judge people. But I've been there and done that. I drink, I drink liquor. I don't liquor stuff, I did, you know, when I specialized in the Army, in the military, you know, but hey. You know, you will come here. You will come in. See, he was raised up in church. He said, you'll come back in someday, you will. I'll be 70. I'll almost 70, I'm 69 now. So, you will come back in.

Grenagle: And is Crisfield pretty religious, would you say?

Campbell: Well, I think there are, because you got a lot of white churches that go and connect with the blacks. And that's a good thing. When you have black and white going to the same churches because you know, it's no color. Blood has no color, see. It's like a rabbi on the highway here, my boy can't think of the farmer. He's a pretty good- good pastor. He can preach you real good. This guy here, this church guy, he's a real good pastor. You know, Guy Murray, he's a good pastor, you know, and they commit sometimes, you know, they get together and- and that's what- that's what really makes a good community, good churches and good pastors. You know.

Gundlach: So do you attend any community events that aren't from the church, like City of Crisfield events, stuff like that?

Campbell: Yeah, oh definitely, definitely, you know definitely. Like I used to go up to Church of God here. They had, every year, they had something for the kids, big balloons for the kid, they had like toys, games and stuff for the kids to do. You know, when they come together, you know, I think most of them they have in the summertime, but it's- it's a good thing, it's good

thing for people, you know. And a lot of people, I really like these guys here, the Tawes, the Sky Swifts and stuff, all of them went to school together, and we didn't have no problem, you know. It was back in the day, it was kind of prejudice back in the day in the 60s, you know, but- but I think a lot of us, you know, we got over that, you know, people get over that, you know. You know, cause- cause you know it's- it's always going to be somebody in the closet, hidden prejudice, you know. You got your most black people prejudice in white really so. [pauses]

Grenagle: What roles does the waterfront of the Chesapeake Bay or around Crisfield, like it's many like beaches or marshlands, what role does that play for you and like the community as far as social life?

Campbell: In the summertime they'd go out to the park and talk about that, you know, and I don't too much for too much water or sun, I don't mess with too much boats and stuff, I don't fool with that. I never was the kind of person that liked boats and stuff, you know? And I seen too much drowning out there; when I was younger, my friend drowned it, and that stuff threw me off from going in the river, you know, don't go in that river, I said, I don't fool with it, but, you know, like a good partner, you know, and had picnics and all that, you know. That's something that people do, you know, in the summertime.

Gundlach: Have the storms and flooding impacted those types of activities and water recreation?

Campbell: Well, we had that big flood and I was over- over by area, anywhere over that area where I stayed, it's a lot of floods. And you got to have to park your car at high ground or my mom stayed with the corner, I'd park it over here and walk, get my boots and stuff. You know, you gotta have boots around here because, you know, it's the kind of place that you gotta have boots, you know. You know if you live here, so you know how the water system is. You know it's really dangerous. It's dangerous really, the water is, because the water comes in your house, it comes all in your house and everything else. I'd have been flooded out, you know, because I remember the year that we had to go up to Washington High. I worked in the system, schools, you know, so we had- had to get people from back here and take them up to, you know, North Area where it's high ground and stuff, you know. That got me into flooding, wow. The hurricanes and tornados are stuck here, but it's just rough right here, really.

Grenagle: And that- that, excuse me, that example, was that Hurricane Sandy?

Campbell: Oh, definitely. Sandy was really rough. Sandy was a really rough right here. Everything right here was flooded, really. That was, my mom's house was, she's up high now, but they came on a porch a little bit. You know, came on the porch and stuff, you know. And she stays high, high over here. It's high ground over here, really. Sandy was good or bad, really? Sandy, Hazel, a lot of things were really bad.

Gundlach: Have you noticed changes in the land, weather, water, or flooding in Crisfield over the years?

Campbell: [inaudible] It's sinking! It's getting worse, really, because I can see what's happening, I guess it's channels, they have that cut- cut the valves off in certain areas of the way. One time up here there wouldn't be no water up here by rigs, now there's water over there. Now there's less water on this side, because it gets to cut the valve off the channels. If you cut the water off, you go, you know. And- and like these highways here, like highway. One time you flooded, it was still flooded, but not flooded as much because they were doing some kind of work there on the main strip there. But you cut them channels off, that's where the water floods to me. Yeah.

Gundlach: Has there been impacts on your ability to acquire food or get to work because of flooding?

Campbell: No, not for me, because if I see it coming, I'm gone. And I'll go somewhere where it's high ground. And I'm a retired now, so I can keep my boots on and walk to my mom's office or something like that, because she's still over here by herself, you know. I stayed with her most of the time, most of time I stayed with her, my brother come down, my sister come down. You know, stay with her. But her house is high. And where I stayed back there, back in the projects, it's low back there really. It'll come in, you'll come, you heard me, if it's like Sandy or something like that, high ground.

Grenagle: Now is that Somers Cove?

Campbell: Somers Cove, yeah, Somers Cove. See, this town really is built on shells, anyway, you know, on shell- shells. It's just built up a little bit, but it's tired, like me, it's turning down, it's going down, down river.

Grenagle: And the way Somers Cove has developed, do you think that, I mean, has it always been a problem with the flooding or do you think that it's something that's come up?

Campbell: I think it's always been a problem because when the tide comes from Chesapeake Bay Bridge, it comes down that coast, and it's like Crab Derby, hey, water all up in there for Crab Derby. You know what I'm talking about, Crab Derby right, senators and all that stuff came in here, the mayor and all the stuff came to here, it's water in there then, you know so. It just needs to be, you know, I don't know if they can build a town up or build a whole city up, but it needs to be higher or something.

Grenagle: So, there was a flooding event during a Crab Derby specifically?

Campbell: It was flooding, but it was flooded in certain areas, like the water was come- coming from the ocean and the tribes going down because low tide and high tide, you know, has water in

certain spots, you know. Not a whole lot of water, but there was enough water, you know, especially if it rains or something like that. Yeah...

Grenagle: Do you remember if that sparked any conversations about flooding in Crisfield? Being that there was.

Campbell: Well, it didn't stop the people from coming over, because I worked- worked over every year, you know. With the Tawes and Scott Tawes, all them, I worked with Scott Tawes, I know Kisha were pretty good, the Tawes, and I worked on every year with them, you know, with the crabs and all that, every year, you know.

Gundlach: So, you talked a little bit about this, but do you have to personally prepare for flooding or severe storms?

Campbell: You got to. You better. If it come, if you know it's going to be high, you need to get rid of that. I wouldn't stay in a flood. I lost grass-cutting all kinds, even lose my car, but- but I say you get it I get out of there cause- cause it'll tear you car up. Two- two of them up, one of my cars that one year, you know, that one, it tore of my car, you know, totaled it. And then the other year, I think- I think one year it missed my grass-cut riding mover and all that but you got preparing, get- get out of there. It was so that I think was so fast I had to take my car on the hedge cutters so I had hit my car. You know, so it can get that fast, you know, it comes in, you got tide, it's tide come in fast.

Gundlach: What is the most common preparation that you see people doing in the community when it's going to flood?

Campbell: Well, flashlights, sleep equipment, some clothes, overnight clothes and things like that, you know, and leave. You got to leave. I mean, people always say that, you know, my fiancée one year, she stayed, wanted to stay there, you know, which it flooded, it came in the house, but it didn't like, you know, come through the house. It could have got worse than this, than it did. But she stayed there, and I took my 20 kids because I was working that year up to Washington High. You know, so I took the kids and then we left. But when we came back, she was devastated, you know, because she's- she's from Mississippi so she, you know, she never really experienced how it was a really bad flood down here. The water's different. But she's seen it happen, and she got it next time, but it can be really rough, you know?

Grenagle: We've heard scary used for like events like Sandy. Would you also consider those events to be scary?

Campbell: Oh yes, yes, yeah! See, you know, we are, by working in the school system, you know, it's that classic, we used to have to take for that, for evaluation, you know, of what we had to do, you know, for help people, you know, to help people in that situation, because we- we had

most time to take people to Washington High School, which had the beds, food, you know, something like that for people, you know. It is a scary thing, you know, really? Especially for the kids, you know? You got to put people in boats and everything, you know, boats are the best around here. It's work, it's good, fast.

Grenagle: So, you had evacuation programs that you were practicing?

Campbell: Yeah, we had things like that, you know, because we had to go up to Washington High and had classes because to show people what we had they had to do when they got there. Make sure all your family was together and put you in a small place like this is your area, this is your area, you know. Get you cots and stuff to sleep in with your families, you know? And then the other people, they had people like the National Guards, you know, go around getting people, bring them to the place, all that kind of stuff, really.

Gundlach: So, are there any storms or flooding events that you remember most vividly?

Campbell: Yeah, that's when I lost- lost my car, I lost the car one time, water coming in, you know, got my car and towed it. Then my grass cutter, I lost my ride mower. All that money I lost from flooding that thing. You know, I didn't get it back. Because where I lived at, the people who owned the place got the money, you know. They got the- the money for something the cuter you know. But I didn't have nothing short, I guess. If I got it short for the company or something, I might go get something. But my insurance gets my car. You know, I got another car behind me.

Grenagle: And was that just a typical flooding event or was that like a hurricane that caused that problem?

Campbell: Probably some flooding event, because when you ride through salt water, it tears your car up anyway, tear your car up. So, by having all these floods around here in Crisfield, eventually going through these water things, you're going to tear that car up, eventually it's going to rust out in the bottom. You know, when you get a tune up or something and they look at the bottom, see how brown it is, and you rust your- your suspension is getting ready to fall. I lost my whole rear tire or something, fell on that side, and I had to get another car. That car I got now, really.

Grenagle: Now do you know anybody that has had any major repairs or remodeling or have to even relocate because of flooding and storms?

Campbell: Mom's house. She they gave her- give her another house now. They built a house for her, she had to go to Marion in the state. They found her a place to- place to stay, you know. Her and my stepfather's, he's dead now, that one- that one flood ahead and the floors was messed all up, you don't so they couldn't stay there.

[Phone call interrupts interview 00:25:31, interview resumes 00:25:41]

Campbell: Yeah, she had to relocate, you know, and they stayed there for a while. They had to build another house, she got another house now, you know, she was the one in the house, she was one of the people that got burnt, bring her homes in right here. Yeah, my mom did, because the whole floor stuff was all messed all up in the house.

Grenagle: Was that part of like FEMA funded?

Campbell: I think so, I think so. The FEMA heard us or something like that.

Grenagle: Okay, and did we heard Mennonites, Mennonite Church being also.

Campbell: Yeah, they came with it. I think they were; I think. It's a guy, I think, I don't know, I didn't get into it with her because I'm like, you know, older people aren't, they don't want you to know the business anyway. But I don't know if it's FEMA or HUD or whatever she got. They got a number on the phone; you don't have to worry.

Gundlach: So, do you feel that climate change is something people in Crisfield actively discuss and plan for?

Campbell: You mean the windmills and stuff?

Gundlach: Like yeah, climate change pertaining to flooding like or increased storm activity, stuff like that. Do you think that's discussed at all?

Campbell: Well, not really. I don't think they do. I mean, they don't, well, people watch, you know, I guess I do anyway, watch some news and stuff, see what's coming or coming- coming, but I don't think people talk about it too much, like, no, you know. I won't think so, anyway. You know, if I'm going to understand what you're talking about, really, but, like, you talking about hurricanes coming here or something or things coming or something?

Gundlach: That and sea level rise, like the water just comes up, and also like increased shore erosion and kind of fluctuating temperatures that do create like more intense storms.

Campbell: Not really, because people might probably talk about it in certain places, because I don't really fool a lot of people I guess, but you got to- you got to be talking about it. Because this town has been like, this town is like, it's going underground. It's like California, California is going underground, underwater. This town is going underwater, see what to me it is. Because to me, it is not getting no better. It's not get no better, I mean, you know, if I got to put my boots on every time it rains or I have a flood, I keep my boots in my car. Because if it floods, floods, and when it rains overnight, I have to move my car because I don't know how much water is going to come in front of my house. Am I going to leave my car? So, I've got to park my car on the high ground behind my house so you're staying, you know, in a certain area so it won't get really flooded. And then I same time that I didn't get in my car for two or three days because it rained

today, it rained tomorrow and eventually that tide's gonna be high, especially where we live at here was tide so- so I don't even drive. Good thing I don't, good thing I ain't working, I guess, but then, you know, when I was working like that, I guess, they said people come get you then, you know, a truck or something, you know. I didn't drive my car around the mess.

Gundlach: How long does water usually stick around, like if you get a good rain?

Campbell: They're about two or three days in the way, a good couple of days, depends upon the tide, the tide you know, like tide coming in, tide corking, you know, like that high tide.

Gundlach: Have you participated in any community events surrounding the issue of flooding, like any events that are specific to flooding?

Campbell: Well, we have like a beat for the housing program a certain amount of time, and it comes up about, you know, about the flooding or some a- some kind of thing to the housing areas, you know. Like, water, something like that, you know?

Gundlach: Do you think that those are- are helpful or do you think they haven't really led to anything?

Gundlach: It's helpful, it's helpful to stay on top of things, you know, to know what's going on, especially in your area where you live in it, you know.

Grenagle: Do you think community turnout is sufficient for?

Campbell: No, people- people don't turn it to that kind of, people don't turn it for nothing. People, that's one of the main problems. People don't know what's going on cause you- you don't attend things. I try to, especially something dealing with housing. Must mean I'm paying rent and stuff like that. You gotta pay rent, I want to know what is going on. If you got somebody who got just saying something wrong with your house over here, I want to know what's going on, you know. And that- that would it's like, they tell you, is like, this- this here program, we got a program here over for this and, you know, things like this, certain things that have been discussed in that meeting, you know. That you should know.

Gundlach: How do you think that the City of Crisfield could help get more people to- to come to those events? Is there like a way to entice people to go to them?

Campbell: Put it on Facebook or put it- put it on a bulletin or something, you know, just shows it. People care or they want you to participate in things, you know, you know. Participate in things that should be important anyway.

Grenagle: How has the local economy kind of changed over your lifetime in Crisfield as far as like- like the fishing, crabbing tourism?

Campbell: Well, that's going to dogs. You got maybe one- one- one- one, two main seafood places, that all. We used to have 10 or 15 seafood places. People shucking oysters every day, picking crabs every day. Seafood, now there's nothing it- nothing going on right here, no more right now. It ain't nothing we'd rather participate for kids. It's nothing to do, you ain't got to move into Crisfield. You ain't gotta boat out. When I was coming up, you had boats out. And movies a crime stuff, we've got nothing really now. You can see why kids get in trouble, go to jail and all that kind of stuff. It's nothing to do. I had my kids in Salisbury when that was coming up, really. They did it last two or three years or four years down here. But it's nothing right here, really. If you don't have your mind set right to do something, get out of here, you won't run nowhere but in jail. Cause it's nothing to do for these kids. He ain't riding of no jobs, really. Paul's Kitchen, I'm with Paul's kitchen. Carvel Hall, [inaudible] crabs or something, they's gone. Crab racings still here and all that.

Grenagle: What do you think has led to this decline?

Campbell: I guess a lot of the old guys are dead. John Catman, those people, John Catman, Donnie Gerald, Frankie Preston, those boys were dead. And they had them crab houses, you know, people dead. And the kids, like Casey, he had IT's place, he's still doing a little something, because then Greg is his brother, them boys- them boys love money, I guess, really. But they make all the money, because, you know, that's the only place they're down here. All the rest of them young boys now, T-man, T-man. T-man and his brother. Them boys ain't doing nothing. Cause them boys getting high. So, so Dian Jarrell, that Dian Jarrell Dian Jarrell's son, Frankie Preston boys, them boys are getting high, so they ain't got no time for that mess. They ain't even got time for no crab races. So that's the day, it's been the stuff go down. Or something probably. But I teach, IT, make your money.

Gundlach: Are there any projects that the City of Crisfield is doing to try and help the local economy and do you think that those are good and will help?

Campbell: Probably still got projects and stuff, you know, sports things for kids and certain projects they have, you know, for getting kids to do things for themselves when they're coming up, you know, and places that they try to take the kids to certain places and stuff, you know, like in Baltimore or somewhere, bus trips, things like that to try to educate them on what's going on their side of the world, sides of here, because they don't have it here for these kids, you know. Nothing right here for the kids.

Grenagle: I had one interview where the person spoke of there seems to be a lack of like role models for the youth. Do you think that's true?

Campbell: Well, it could be true, yeah, because it's not like these boys now, they don't, especially young guys, they got no jobs, they don't want to work, a lot of them people don't want work right here. I mean, man, we was coming up, everybody had little hustles, and work here

and there, you know, made money, you know. I guess it was more than stuff going on, Paul's Kitchen and then things like that picking crabs and oysters, shucking oysters. You go down and shuck oysters and make 30, 40, 50 dollars, then you know, every day, do that every day, you got two or three hundred dollars in your pocket. But now it's nothing to do, there's not to do.

Gundlach: If you could have something put in right now, a perfect situation, what would- what would you put in to help the economy?

Campbell: Movies, bowling out, things like that, man, even a snack shop, like a fried chicken place, Popeyes, anything, you know, anything to get the economy rolling, you know. You need businesses down here, businesses. Got one McDonald's. That's a good place, but like I said, you need a Burger King's or cause I can fry a chicken or something. Taco Bell, anything, you know. Princess Anne's is building up, but Crisfield ain't doing nothing, you know. Got places in Princess Anne, food places, right here, right there.

Grenagle: And do you expect younger generations to kind of exit Crisfield?

Campbell: Oh, they leave, they leave in a minute. They graduate, they leave! Cause there's nothing around here!

Gundlach: So you briefly talked about Princess Anne building up their economy. Would you like to see something similar to that kind of model of- of building up in Crisfield?

Campbell: Yeah, yeah. Movies and movies they got, they got a Dunkin' Doughnuts, and they got all kind of- they got on all kinds of stuff to present. You got a pizza shops, you know, what got a pizza shop here, but you get tired of the same stuff, you know. You got Royal Farms and all that, you ain't got nothing right here. You got one grocery store. Come on, man, that ain't, that, that's it, that what people been through there. They could hardline more people if they had another store or something. Get your kids a job.

Grenagle: How do you think the flooding issues would need to be remedied before those jobs like that business or beautification were to come back?

Campbell: Maybe, maybe, but if you're going to work, if you want to stay somewhere, you go step in and come back here every day. You know, if I wanted to work down here or had a job down here, I would move in right, you know, move, press that in. And come back every day with my car. But you got to have a car, I guess, right? You know, got to have transportation. And a lot of people had transportation, but you got bus- busses coming through here, you know, every day, that was a good thing, you know, they had busses.

Grenagle: How do you see yourself sticking around Crisfield?

Campbell: I can't go nowhere now. I'm too old. I'm almost 70 years old, I can tell people about the rent. It's going to go up anyway but as long as my mother's here, I'll be here anyway. As long as my mother is here. My mother is 91 years old. I've been here for a while now, you know. I couldn't get, I kept waiting for her to get a house. I probably could, but I ain't gonna put that on myself with that struggle, you know. Trying to get a home, guess I'll take her mother's home and try to get, to do something with that, you know. But me starting all over again? No, now you can't, you can start all over again in those 70 years old. How long you gonna live? 10 years? 20 years? You might not live 20 years. Dude, you ain't going to be able to do too much or nothing production-wise. If I get no home on Friday, I don't do nothing but get no homes on Sunday.

Gundlach: So, do you have any opinions on how the city, county, or state government has handled the flooding issues in Crisfield?

Campbell: And then and then give us all the support we needed, you know, to try to build this town up, unless they wanted to run it off the map. You know, that's what could happen. It should be off the map. It's like California. California's sinking, and eventually it's just going to float away. That's what's probably going to happen to Crisfield in the next 30, 40, 50 years, if there isn't any life at all around here.

Grenagle: And support, what do you mean by support? Just for clarification.

Campbell: Well, if they're trying to do something about some of these water systems, I mean, if they give us a million dollars, is it going to hurt the government? Anytime they spend a million dollars on- on- on crap you think they can't give a city or country, I mean, city some money to help- help, why- why wouldn't they want to do it? You know, why you think everyone want to doing cause they don't- they don't see nothing happen right here, but- but what's happened. That's one thing.

Gundlach: Do you feel that your voice and the voices of the other citizens of Crisfield are being heard by the government?

Campbell: If everybody get together, maybe it might produce, maybe there'll be something. If everybody gets together, probably a- a- a- a petition or something, write a petition. It might help, it might make some kind of say. You just can't accept it and push beneath the table. [pauses]

Gundlach: So, are you hopeful for the future of Crisfield and where would you like to see it heading in the next 20 years?

Campbell: I hope it succeeds and have different projects for people and have different jobs for people. Build different jobs to people around here. Some places for these kids to do, something these kids to do and places to go. You know, movies and something. Pass my bill a movie on it. If you're going to have rich people around, let them do something with the money. I can't care. I

mean, do something with the money, help these kids. Help these kids instead of putting them in jails, you know? Help these kids to set with their life.

Grenagle: And are you optimistic that that will happen?

Campbell: I hope, hope something like that happens, you know, you never know, you can't tell the future, because it might not, it might never happen, but I'm hoping that it does happen, for the for all these kids.

Gundlach: And would you recommend Crisfield as a place to live for someone who wants to move?

Campbell: Well, it's a nice place to live, if- if- if they find some nice things to do, you know. Things to do for these kids, places to go, jobs. Any job for a city to be productive, you got your jobs and things for these people to do.

Grenagle: So, I imagine I probably have answered this question already with your emphasis on getting jobs, but like what wisdom would you share with future generations for- for Crisfieldians?

Campbell: Just get the most education you can so that you can't- if you can't- you can't get the job or something you want here, take it people like do it out of it, get away- get away from here and leave and go and go, it don't- don't let the education you to learn go to waste. Don't let it go to waste, use it. Get away from here, man, dude. My son's- my son's in the military, been in military for 13 years, in the Marine Corps. He's in California, he ain't thinking about coming right here no more, really, because there's nothing right here for him to do. What would- what would he do right here? He's been a drill sergeant, a recruiter, he'd been with the president, he was a photographer, he would take pictures of the presidents and all that. What would he do right there? What kind of job do you think he would have right here? But he wanted- he said he wanted to be a broadcaster, you know, on TV. He can't be on TV Salisbury WBO. He's too smart for him to be around here, really, no way. Because he could be back here on- on drugs and things if he came back right here. Guess what's left of us around here? These young boys.

Grenagle: So, I was gonna ask- ask about that, if your son were to come back, do you think he'd have a positive impact on the City of Crisfield and it's youth though?

Campbell: Maybe on some of his friends, but then they said that these kids are just other kids. See, I worked with kids for 20-30 years, but they're just other kid. They say you're doing something. They might try and knock you what you're doing it because they're going to figure, well, you think you're better than me. It's not that. They're trying to help you. They're just trying to talk to you, trying to get you in a better spot in your life, you know. But some kids don't think

of it that way, see, so he's- he he's- doing good, it's like, where is that? I don't really, he wouldn't even come back right here. I'll go California and see him before I would let him come back here.

Gundlach: Is there any last thoughts that you have about anything related to what we've talked about or in general?

Campbell: I just like, you know, talk to kids. I talk to kids now; you're trying to get them to do something with their life. To tell- tell them there is a better place for you. If you have to go somewhere else and get it, you gotta- gotta do something instead of going jail, because that's what's gonna happen to you. If- if you're on that street, you gonna go to jail. I lived- I lived in some rough places in my life. And it's- it's a place for you. If you think you're bad or you think of this and that, it's a place for you. And everything's done in- in- in the dark with death to come in the light. So you can't hide it from the Lord, cause it's gonna come back in the life. So don't you think that you did something and you can get away with it, cause you're not, you know.

Grenagle: And I guess just one last thought, is there anything you want to talk about that we haven't spoken about?

Campbell: No, not really. You said a lot, really.

Grenagle: Well, we appreciate your time.

Gundlach: Yes, thank you so much.

[Transcript ends]